



Washington State Senate



LINDA EVANS PARLETTE
Washington State Senator, 12th District
MEMORANDUM



TO: SENATOR KEN JACOBSEN, CHAIR
SENATOR MARK DOUMIT, VICE CHAIR
NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION COMMITTEE

FROM: SENATOR LINDA EVANS PARLETTE

SUBJECT: SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8000

DATE: 1/25/2005

CC: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ice Age Floods trails

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SJM 8000. This petition to the Federal government is in support of the bipartisan bill in Congress, HR4944, which would establish an Ice Age Floods Trail. There are other similar trails throughout the United States, such as Allegany Trail in New York and the Lewis and Clark Trail. These trails, as well as being of historical importance, are important natural resources.

Trails of this nature are operated by the National Park Service. The Ice Age Floods Trail does not involve the purchase of large portions of land. It would utilize existing state and county parks, as well as facilities. The state of Washington already has established an important park that will contribute to the trail, Dry Falls State Park, in Grand Coulee.

To further explain the significance of this project, I have attached a copy of a letter I received from the President of the Ice Age Floods Institute, Gary Kleinknecht. Your consideration of this measure is appreciated.

To really appreciate the potential value of an Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, it is helpful to have something with which to compare it. We are all familiar with the “Lewis and Clark Trail”. Both trails are similar in that they have no significant land areas – only routes on a map. Like the Lewis and Clark Trail, the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail (IAFNGT) will offer similar benefits.

The economic benefits are primarily tourist related. Increased tourism dollars, particularly in rural areas of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, will provide badly needed revenue that is non-farm related. There are millions of potential tourists living within “One Tank Full of Gas” of some portion of this trail. As the Ice Age Floods story becomes more well known, tourists living farther away will come to see the trail for themselves. In our area of the state, where we guide several field trip tours each year, people from all over the United States, Germany and even Australia, have come to see our unique geological and Ice Age Floods features.

While it is difficult to predict the level of interest the IAFNGT will generate, it is again worthwhile using the Lewis and Clark Trail as a comparison. The amount of revenue generated by the Lewis and Clark Trail project has been considerable. Yet there are few things to see along the trail that are directly related to the expedition itself. The primary impact of the Lewis and Clark Trail is created by the compelling story of the expedition and by the opportunity to see where it took place.

In comparison, the IAFNGT not only has the compelling story, but also an overwhelming number of geologic and Ice Age Flood features. All of these features (ice dam sites, the largest dry water falls in the world, massive bars of sand and gravels, giant coulees, etc.) were created by over 500 cubic miles of water moving at fifty to sixty miles per hour. This did not happen just once; it happened at least forty times. Keep in mind that all of these features, without exception, may be seen from a car window, from a dedicated road or highway.

Actually, the use of the word “trail” may be somewhat of a misnomer. In the long run, the IAFNGT would be much more than just a “trail car route”. Eventually, one can envision hiking routes in various areas of interest (including on public lands) and a tie-in with the Columbia Plateau Trail through the scablands from Pasco to Spokane. Also, there are air tours conducted by local flying services, and a project in the works to build a “Water Trail” from Bonneville Dam to Orofino, Idaho, for canoes and kayaks. These are all spin-offs of the same theme - the IAFNGT.

The costs associated with the creation of the IAFNGT project will be relatively small because the geologic and Ice Age Floods features are already there! The designated overseer of the project, the National Park Service, has been limited to acquiring no more than twenty-five acres along the entire twenty-five hundred to three thousand mile length of this trail of pathways, loops, and spurs. In most cases, nothing needs to be done except the making of the highway signage and designated pull outs along the roads. Some of our Ice Age Floods Institute chapters are already working on this phase of the project in their areas. Numerous towns and cities along the route within our state have already offered resolutions in support of the trail.

Finally, recognizing the truth of the old saying “A picture is worth a thousand words”, we would suggest that all legislators view Washington State University’s 13 ½ minute video entitled “The Great Floods, Cataclysms of the Ice Age”. This video will dramatically illustrate how compelling the story and the geologic features of the IAFNGT really are. The potential of the IAFNGT will then be readily apparent.

Respectfully yours,

**Gary Kleinknecht,
President, Ice Age Floods Institute**

**Endorsed by:
Charlie Mason
President, Wenatchee Valley Erratics Chapter of the Ice Age Floods Institute
Ken Lacy
Past-president, Wenatchee Valley Erratics Chapter of the Ice Age Floods Institute
Susan Lacy
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